

Shemaya Laurel  
Gouldsboro  
LD 2007

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and other members of the Committee on Judiciary,

I am writing in support of LD 2007, An Act to Advance Self-Determination for Wabanaki Nations.

This legislation is important for so many reasons:

- Wabanaki Nations and surrounding communities in rural Maine are being held down economically. Self-determination and self-governance are drivers of tribal well-being, in everything from public health and education to economic opportunity.
- As across this entire country, tribal nations are not municipalities. They are sovereign nations. Maine is the only state which, to our shame, has spent the last 40 years refusing to recognize inherent Wabanaki sovereignty. The state of Maine treats Wabanaki Nations as municipalities in relation to the state. This needs to change, and LD 2007 will fix this.
- Wabanaki Nations and surrounding rural communities in Maine are missing out on the benefits of federal Indian legislation. Why would we do this to ourselves? LD 2007 addresses this.
- The history of colonialism is fraught. Maine is perpetuating that paternalistic history by refusing to acknowledge and respect Wabanaki sovereignty.
- The reputation of Maine, across this country, is strong in so many ways. It is not strong on this issue, as the only state to treat Indigenous nations as if they are not nations. It's an embarrassment, because we are wrong. Passing this legislation shows the world that we know what's right, and we are doing it.
- LD 2007 addresses the inequities established in the 1980 Settlement Acts, beginning to put things right.

For all of these reasons, I ask you to please support passage of LD 2007.

Respectfully,  
Shemaya Laurel